

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TRIBE STEPS FORWARD WITH NEARLY \$700,000 FOR HURRICANE KATRINA AND HURRICANE RITA RELIEF EFFORTS

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Provides Support to Fellow Tribal Nations and State Governments

SAN MANUEL INDIAN NATION – The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, today announced it donated nearly \$700,000 to help in the relief efforts for those affected by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita as well as service and in-kind donations from Tribal citizens and employees. Cash donations from the Tribe were distributed to fellow Native American governments in the Southeast and Texas and to the Governor's Relief Fund earlier last week.

“With so many people impacted by this disaster, we wanted to use whatever resources we had at our disposal to help,” said Chairman Deron Marquez of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. “It was especially important for us to help our tribal brothers and sisters as they rebuild their communities and government infrastructures. In fact, we encourage other tribal nations who can afford to assist in the relief efforts to get involved as additional resources are sorely needed.”

As part of the donation, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians dispersed funds to several Native American tribes who suffered significant damage to their reservations as a result of the devastating hurricanes. The Chitimacha Indian Tribe in Louisiana required assistance following Hurricane Katrina as they found themselves providing shelter to approximately 70 tribal families, who after being evacuated from the surrounding areas, have returned to the reservation in the interim with serious needs for shelter, food, clothing and other basic necessities. Additionally, the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, were hit hardest by Hurricane Rita and have no power or utilities and are assisting approximately 200 tribal citizens who are living in a makeshift shelter in a gymnasium on the reservation. San Manuel is also making contributions to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

Monies from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians were also contributed to Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama in conjunction with the Governor's Relief Fund which provides financial assistance to the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, Mississippi Hurricane Fund and the Alabama Governor's Emergency Relief Fund.

Additionally, an employee and tribal member fundraising campaign to assist victims was established by the Tribe on immediately following the hurricane. The San Manuel Employee and Tribal Citizen Relief Campaign, along with the Tribe's Community Outreach department has identified three charities including, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and America's Second. Employees and tribal citizens have been able to contribute their personal donations to their designated charity and to date the campaign has raised \$6,000 for the relief efforts.

Also, in response to the United States Fire Administration's request to mobilize firefighters, the San Manuel Fire Department deployed three firefighters on September 1, to aid where needed. San Manuel Fire Chief Michael J. Smith, Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician Ken Bryson and Engineer and Emergency Medical Technician Greg Regan will become FEMA Disaster Assistance Employees with an initial deployment of at least 30 to 120 days. Currently, Chief Smith is part of the Disaster Medical Assistant Team in Texas.

“One cannot help but be affected by the devastation felt in the Gulf Coast, and as a first responder your immediate instinct is to want to help,” said Chief Mike Smith of the San Manuel

Fire Department. “I welcome this opportunity to do what I can to help survivors recover and act as a representative for the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.”

Recognizing the immediate need for clean drinking water, the Tribe contributed an in-kind donation of 1,488 cases of Big Bear Premium water from the San Manuel Bottled Water Group - the Tribe’s bottled water plant. The Big Bear Premium Water will go to aid victims and first responders along with the 500 members of the California Air National Guard sent to aid in the recovery efforts.

About the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, Calif. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys and mountains who share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Despite challenges and hardships, the San Manuel tribal community has continued to progressively maintain and enhance its unique form of governance - focusing all efforts on providing a better quality of life for its citizens. Through economic diversification, both on and off the reservation, the tribe has been forward thinking in its efforts to build infrastructure, maintain civil services and promote social, economic, educational and cultural development. Today, the San Manuel tribal government has created essential governmental units including the departments of fire, public safety, education and environment and continues to pursue opportunities for future generations.

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